

Research Methods: proposal

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RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM - MBA PROGRAM

1. Project (Research Topic) Title

The Impact and Analysis of Corporate Culture on Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe Telecom Sector

2. Introduction

For any international business to succeed it requires a motivated and dedicated human resource base. This is the moment where organizational behavior and culture must be conceptualized. Organizational behavior is termed as any type of action that comes from an organization's work environment structure and culture. Complimentary change can be nurtured in organizations through utilizing different cultural practices by management cascading to its floor staff members to influence organizational behavior. For this to take effect there is need for strategic planning, requisition of feedback from stakeholders utilizing measurable change tools that yield authentic results. When culture change is at stake the organization should explore all avenues through risk analysis and frameworks that will yield positive returns at the same time reducing negative influences on its brand. To be in control of the situation there ought to be a foresight vision that is supported by knowledge and factual analyzed data. Any organization can transform itself into great workplace of first choice through trust and mutual respect across stakeholders driven by the

leadership with a common purpose and vision for the enterprise. Exceptional work environments are proven through a powerful commitment to work as people walk the talk in a genuine and transparent manner that debunk the myth that they are some people who are bigger than the business or are indispensable. Clear and well-defined communication structures with a straightforward vision, coupled with strong values and beliefs are the epicenter for survival of an enterprise (Schrage, 1999; Kets de Vries et al, 2009).

Econet Wireless Holdings is an international diverse telecommunications organization operating in nine different nations in Africa, Europe, and the East Asia Pacific Rim. It was formed on the 10th of July 1998 in Zimbabwe. Their core business leverages on mobile and fixed telephony products, internet and satellite distribution, data center provisions and payment processing solutions. The organization is headquartered in South Africa and operates each of its entities as a stand-alone managed and controlled by a local board and management.

The company was the first to introduce the concept of mobile telephony in Zimbabwe. The company applied for a cellular operating license in 1996 only to be granted the license in 1998; after two years of wrangling with the government in court battles. This battle laid the foundation for the company's business operating culture, one that is overly aggressive. As a result of the aggressive business culture, the company is now the largest G4 mobile operator in Zimbabwe with over 64% market share and more than 12million connected subscribers.

Research Aim

The research seeks to explore and investigate the claim that corporate culture plays a major part in determining organization competitiveness. Beyond studying Econet's existing culture, this study ascertains the critical factors of organizational culture that influences its competitiveness. Lastly, an examination of adapting to a new culture is also done to address competitiveness effectively.

Research Questions

The questions that will guide the study are:

1. What is the current Econet organizational culture and does it influence organizational competitiveness?
2. In what way does corporate culture impact Econet's organizational competitiveness?
3. Is there a possibility of creating a new culture over the existing one?

Research Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. To study the existing Econet organizational culture and its link with organizational competitiveness
2. To investigate the influencing factors of organizational culture on competitiveness.

3. To ascertain Econet's culture management strategy & to determine possible strategies to remediate weaknesses in the culture by building a better cultural shift on top of the existing one.

3. Literature Review

This section will dissect the concept of organizational culture and how it manages competitive leverage. It explores theories, academic and journal literatures, frameworks of organizational culture, and nurtured competitive advantage to ascertain an answer as to whether corporate behavior has any bearing in nurturing and maintaining competitiveness to an institution.

An institution's culture requires a positive proactive approach to embrace, nurture, and maintain transformation that will yield better performance. This research is being undertaken to get a positive corporate culture that is highly regarded by founding fathers, management, employees, and other stakeholders who provide services to the enterprise. Integrity, honesty, and self-retrospection are certain attributes that are needed to shape a new narrative that gives direction that enables the corporate to leverage on its competitive advantage. A positive attitude to transform from bad organizational behavior can increase performance and improve staff morale (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Organizational behavior is regarded as the sticking glue that binds and institution firmly together (Tichy, 1982). Forehand and von Gilmer (1964) insinuate that culture is the set of characteristics that define an institution and separates it from its competitors. Schein (1990), in a holistic design, refers organizational culture as ethos, and actions that are said to steer a company to succeed and thus taught to new stakeholders.

Central to the culture description as an ideal that culture must be acknowledged and be shared (Titiev, 1959). The culture of an organization can be termed as a pattern of combined fundamentals assumptions that have been learned through experience during resolution of challenges of outside adaptation and inside integration. These endeavors would have been validated to the extent that

they will be taught to new joining members (Schein, 1990). As an organization evolve as time passes-by. They encounter two fundamental challenges: integrating employees and stakeholders

into an efficient and conforming them to external pressures for survival. Organizations endeavor to find lasting solutions to these predicaments, they captivate a collective learning approach that develops the collaborative propositions and beliefs that are termed “Culture”.

Morgan (1997) refers organizational culture as functional living phenomenon through which groups jointly develop and recreates the worlds in which they reside in. Morgan pinpoints at the three fundamental questions often asked by cultural commentators:

1. Common models of sources that makes an institution viable
2. Place of origination
3. Development, transmission, and nurturing aspects.

Organizational behavior is termed differently by various academics. The conclusion to it is that they are a collection of doctrines, testaments, ethos, and hypotheticals that stitches institutions.

The inter linked inner classes exhibit an institution’s concurrence, unspoken or spoken, on how best to reach determinations and challenges that have become the norm of operations at an institution (Kilmann, Saxton, and Serpa, 1986). Deshpande & Parasuraman (1986) terms organizational behavior as the unwritten, mostly unconscious communication conveyed between what is meticulously dictated and what precisely happens.

Cooper and Cartwright (2013) agree with Kilmann’s (1982) view as they term organizational culture as emblems, values, ideologies, and assumptions that operate, often in an unconscious way, to guide and pattern individual and business behavior and serve to develop organizational cohesiveness. It maintains order and regularity to the lives of its members, and only assumes salience in their minds when it is threatened or disturbed. Mintberg (1999) terms organizational behavior as the heartbeat of an institution – the ethos, faith, and virtues and how they are communicated. Meek (1988) pointed how culture creates myths, rituals, and legends in institutions. Which are all managed through shared emblems and practices. Organizational culture vents values and ethos that stakeholders of an institution have common interest.

Lee and Yu (2004) show cases that an organization's culture is the one that develops an institution's key identity that allows in transforming its workforce's actions in executing their mandate. An institution's culture is the compass that gives direction on how its operations are carried out. As it chooses apparatus, norms, and ethos which people enact events (Pheysey, 1993). Schein (1999) elaborates that organizational culture is the collective of all collaborations attitudes and actions done by stakeholders in an institution throughout its operational history that is often taken for granted. It's now known that culture is a systematic structure that manages, and controls behavioral principles. Schein (1999) further elaborates that the potency and degree of blending of a norm is a function of the firmness of the cluster. The period in place determines the intensity of the cluster's experience of learning, the mechanisms by which the learning has occurred. That is, positive reinforcement or avoidance conditioning and the strength and clarity of the assumptions held by the founders and leaders of the cluster.

4. Research Process

There are two key areas in research; quantitative study which concerns the aim of researching items and qualitative study which is a particular way of studying items (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2003; White, 2000). Literature on study solely refers to the quantitative method as positivism and the qualitative method as phenomenology (Roberts, Wallace, and O'Farrell, 2003; Saunders *et al.*, 2003; White, 2000). Due to this underlining fact this study will inherit a greater interpretivist philosophy and a qualitative method to explore the role of culture in gaining and sustaining competitive advantage in an institution. The qualitative method ushers out a chance for a holistic perspective of the study into these patterns of intent thinking and action that are not specifically amenable to reductionist examination (Gummesson, 1991). Ott (1989) utilized the qualitative method in examining the culture at AT&T, during the commencement phases of deregistration and the disbandment of the Bell monopoly in the USA.

Academic authors as Benbasat (1997) and Saunders et al (1997) agree that there is no particular methodology that is intrinsically better than another approach. They support the utilization of a

combination of study approaches as a route of enhancing the quality of the study. White (2000) spells out that it is ideally attainable to combine study approaches within the same piece of study and this is termed triangulation.

Research Methodology

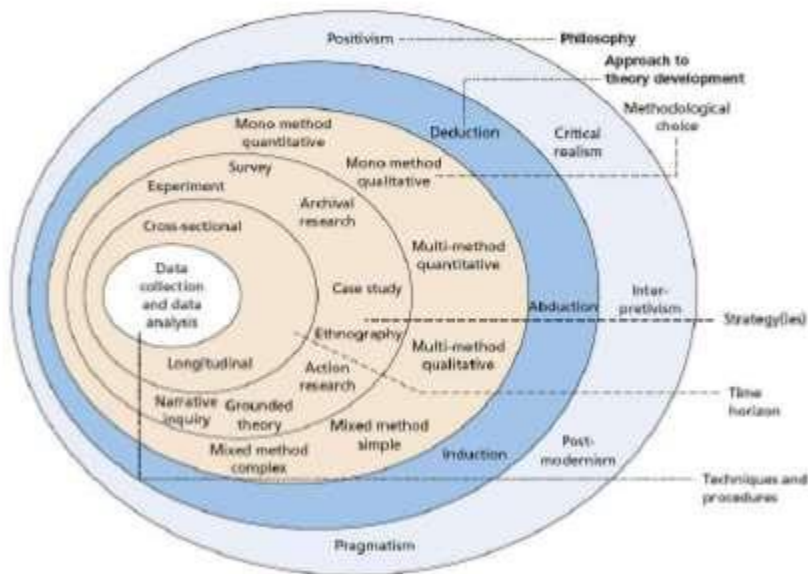


Figure 4.1 The research 'onion'
Source: © 2015 Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill

Justification for Preferred Philosophy

Against the backdrop of the four research philosophies briefly explained above, this research work adopts a positivist research philosophy for the following reasons. The selected research approach delinks the researcher from respondents to ensure an objective outcome which requires the researcher to desist from any interaction with the respondents. This will be achieved through a survey feedback medium that will allowed access to participants' responses only after completion.

Secondly, the preferred research method is quantitative for a survey research strategy which is an identifying element of a positivist research philosophy. The various responses will be scientifically analyzed through hypotheses that will be tested in the process. Findings from the hypotheses testing helped provide explanations on the adoption, or otherwise, of the perception of AI in the operations of universal banks in Ghana.

Research Approach

Guided by the preferred research philosophy described above, this research work employs deductive approach for its analysis. Deductive approach to research basically refers to development of hypotheses carved out from theories captured in the research work that are subjected to selected research analytical methods to test the hypotheses (Dudovskiy, 2010). The hypotheses test results indicate whether it should be confirmed or rejected depending on the outcome of the null and alternate hypotheses.

Research will be conducted mostly through data reviews, population sample surveys, and sampling techniques. Reviewing academic literature outlining the topic under study. Using online sources of others' research works and interviews of stakeholders. Explanations for adopting such strategies will be presented and discussed. Study limitations and ethical factors will also be argued in this section.

Task	Research Type	Research Methods	Techniques
1	Archive Research	Analysis of different academic literatures and Journals	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notes and content dissection2. Reference content from textbooks3. Academic and Journal ideal guides
2	Online Research	Internet browsing for data on research subject	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Collecting data for analysis
3	Individual interviews	Conduct online interviews with selected stakeholders of Econet	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discussion points2. Notes and content dissection

Data collection methods

There is a wide choice of methodologies to choose from and each can be classified as conforming to the positivist or interpretivist paradigms.

Surveys

They will be utilized to gather data about practices, situations, or reviews at one point in time through questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative methods will then be utilized to draw inferences from the data regarding current relationships. Virtually all surveys aim to describe or explain the characteristics or opinion of a population using a representative sample (May, 2001).

Population and Sampling Method.

A population is the sum collection of elements about which one wish to make some inferences (Cooper and Schindler, 2003:179). The research will focus mainly on Econet Wireless.

Sampling Methods

Sample will be chosen from the total population for equal representation (Hill, *et al.*, 2003). Saunders *et al.* (2003) points that the requirement of sampling comes up when the total population cannot be polled due to budget, time hinderances and other uncontrollable impossibilities. Cooper and Schindler (2003) affirm that population sampling lowers costs, brings out accuracy of the outcome, speed is enhanced on data gathering.

Sampling Techniques.

In the world of research there are two fundamental techniques of sampling: probability and non-probability (White, 2000). Saunders et al (1997) points out that to lower mistakes during sampling, utilizing a larger population size yields positive outcomes to the research. Thirty (30) units are the said to be a reasonable figure for statistical data analysis. May (2001) has a different school of thought where he believes that population size does not matter. The crucial part is the quality of the population sample' s attributes which will contribute to the outcome findings.

Sample Size

According to Lemann (1979) determining the number of units to use as samples can be complicated that might include a whole segment of Bayesian statistics. Coming up with a sample

proportion for qualitative approach is not that simple compared to using a quantitative approach as no boundaries are followed. Choosing the right sample population will leverage on the scope of the research through personal judgement from this researcher.

This research study will have two populations or sampling frames. One population will be Econet Wireless employees (management and staff) and the agents who are its strategic partners in servicing customers, the other population will be Econet Wireless customers. The reason for having two population samples is to attain the project’s aims. This study will be conducted for employees and agents (internal evaluation) and customers (external evaluation) independently and then compare the findings.

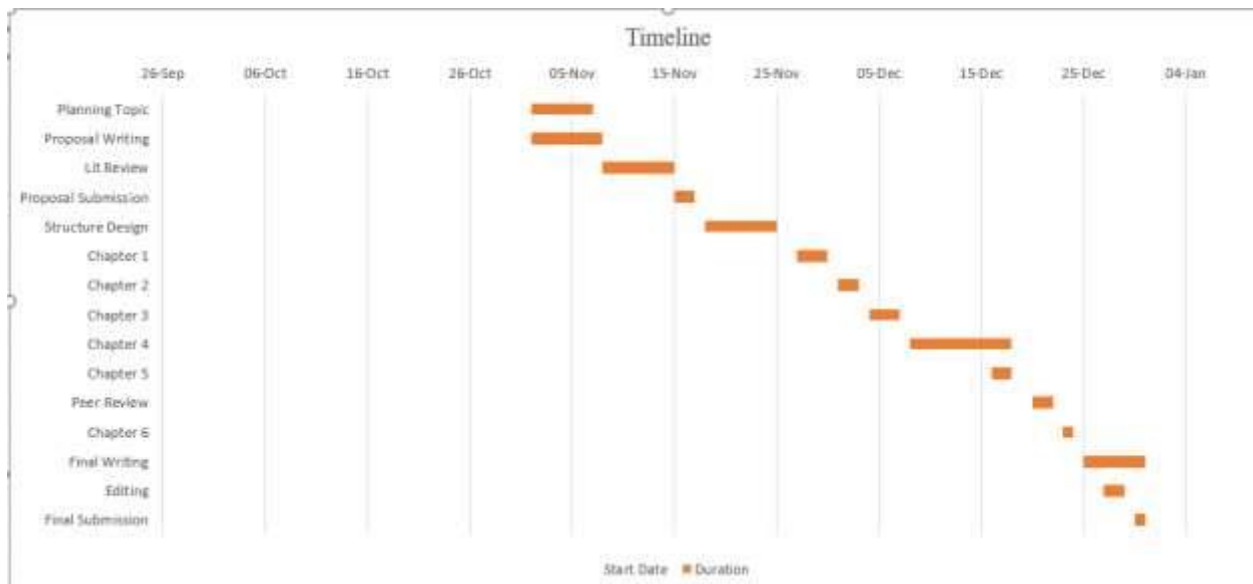
5. Research plan and timelines of thesis submission

The following is the provision delivery and program schedule for the proposed study. The program is anticipated to be completed within **60 days**, depending on data availability and the supervisors’ inputs and guidance.

Time-Period	Duration	Activities	Outcomes
1-7 Nov 2020	6days	<input type="checkbox"/> In-depth reading about the topic literature review; methodology; analytical tools research; and engagements with stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> Research topic confirmation
8-15 Nov 2020	6days	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal writing <input type="checkbox"/> Literature review	<input type="checkbox"/> Research proposal completed. <input type="checkbox"/> A preliminary agreement with tutor completed
15-17 Nov 2020	1days	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal Turnitin for plagiarism checking <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal submission	<input type="checkbox"/> Title registration
18-25 Nov 2020	6days	<input type="checkbox"/> Research structure design <input type="checkbox"/> Approval of the thesis structure by Supervisors	<input type="checkbox"/> Research structure completed & approved by Supervisors

Time-Period	Duration	Activities	Outcomes
27-30 Nov 2020	2days	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 1: Introduction <input type="checkbox"/> Literature Review <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical framework	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 1: Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 2: Draft
1-3 Dec 2020	2days	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 2: Literature review <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical Configuration	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 2: Completion
4-7 Dec2020	2days	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 3: Research methodology <input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaires design <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical clearance <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st Data collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 3: Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative questionnaire completed <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews schedule completed
8-11 Dec 2020	2days	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 st Data collection (continues) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 ^d Data collection and coding	<input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative questionnaire completed <input type="checkbox"/> Data capturing commencement
12-15 Dec 2022	2days	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 ^d Data collection and coding <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive model/tool design <input type="checkbox"/> Data capturing & triangulation <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 4: Data presentation & analysis - Qualitative	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 4: Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 5: Draft
16-18 Dec 2020	1days	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive model/tool design <input type="checkbox"/> Data capturing & triangulation <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 5: Data presentation & analysis - Quantitative	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 5: Completed
20-22 Dec 2020	1days	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer review	<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary findings showcased
23- 25 Dec 2020	1days	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 6: Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Research draft
25 -31 Dec 2020	4days	<input type="checkbox"/> Final write-up <input type="checkbox"/> Editing and administration <input type="checkbox"/> Final Submission	<input type="checkbox"/> Final research completed

Gantt Chart - Timeline



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